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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/604,829	08/20/2003	Manojkumar Saranathan	GEMS8081.169	1828
27061	7590	09/22/2006	EXAMINER	
ZIOLKOWSKI PATENT SOLUTIONS GROUP, SC (GEMS)			SOLANKI, PARIKHA	
14135 NORTH CEDARBURG ROAD			ART UNIT	
MEQUON, WI 53097			PAPER NUMBER	
			3737	

DATE MAILED: 09/22/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/604,829	Applicant(s) SARANATHAN ET AL.	
	Examiner Parikha Solanki	Art Unit 3737	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 20 August 2003.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-26 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-26 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☒ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 8/20/03 is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☒ objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date <u>8/20/03</u> | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Specification

1. The abstract of the disclosure is objected to because there is a grammatical error in line 7: it is recommended that the phrase "...pulses are applied each R-R..." be corrected to read "...pulses are applied at each R-R..." or another phrase of similar wording. Correction is suggested. See MPEP § 608.01(b).
2. The disclosure is objected to because of the following informalities:
 - a. On line 5 of ¶ 20, the drawing reference number is associated with the incorrect part of the sentence. It is suggested that the phrase "...assembly generally designated 50 to produce..." be replaced with "...assembly 50 generally designated to produce...", or that the reference number be otherwise moved so as to clearly indicate the element being referenced.
 - b. On line 3 of PP23, the sentence reads "...after an ECG trigger 112 of an R-R interval...". It is noted that label 50 in Figure 2 does not in fact refer to an entire R-R interval, but rather the precise moment of initiation of ventricular systole. It is suggested that the above-quoted phrase be modified to read "...after an ECG trigger 112 of the start of an R-R interval..." or a similar modification thereof.

Appropriate correction is required.

Drawings

3. The drawings are objected to under 37 CFR 1.83(a). The drawings must show every feature of the invention specified in the claims. Therefore, all limitations of the methods of claims 3-12 must be shown or the feature(s) canceled from the claim(s). No new matter should be entered.
4. The drawings are objected to as failing to comply with 37 CFR 1.84(p)(4) because reference character "110" has been used to designate both a conventional black blood sequence and an ECG-gated pulse sequence, and it cannot be inferred by common knowledge in the art that the two terms are equivalent.
5. Corrected drawing sheets in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(d) are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. Any amended replacement drawing sheet should include all of the figures appearing on the immediate prior version of the sheet, even if only one figure is being amended. The figure or figure number of an amended drawing should

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not be labeled as "amended." If a drawing figure is to be canceled, the appropriate figure must be removed from the replacement sheet, and where necessary, the remaining figures must be renumbered and appropriate changes made to the brief description of the several views of the drawings for consistency. Additional replacement sheets may be necessary to show the renumbering of the remaining figures. Each drawing sheet submitted after the filing date of an application must be labeled in the top margin as either "Replacement Sheet" or "New Sheet" pursuant to 37 CFR 1.121(d). If the changes are not accepted by the examiner, the applicant will be notified and informed of any required corrective action in the next Office action. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

Double Patenting

6. The nonstatutory double patenting rejection is based on a judicially created doctrine grounded in public policy (a policy reflected in the statute) so as to prevent the unjustified or improper timewise extension of the "right to exclude" granted by a patent and to prevent possible harassment by multiple assignees. A nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting rejection is appropriate where the conflicting claims are not identical, but at least one examined application claim is not patentably distinct from the reference claim(s) because the examined application claim is either anticipated by, or would have been obvious over, the reference claim(s). See, e.g., *In re Berg*, 140 F.3d 1428, 46 USPQ2d 1226 (Fed. Cir. 1998); *In re Goodman*, 11 F.3d 1046, 29 USPQ2d 2010 (Fed. Cir. 1993); *In re Longi*, 759 F.2d 887, 225 USPQ 645 (Fed. Cir. 1985); *In re Van Ornum*, 686 F.2d 937, 214 USPQ 761 (CCPA 1982); *In re Vogel*, 422 F.2d 438, 164 USPQ 619 (CCPA 1970); and *In re Thorington*, 418 F.2d 528, 163 USPQ 644 (CCPA 1969).

A timely filed terminal disclaimer in compliance with 37 CFR 1.321(c) or 1.321(d) may be used to overcome an actual or provisional rejection based on a nonstatutory double patenting ground provided the conflicting application or patent either is shown to be commonly owned with this application, or claims an invention made as a result of activities undertaken within the scope of a joint research agreement.

Effective January 1, 1994, a registered attorney or agent of record may sign a terminal disclaimer. A terminal disclaimer signed by the assignee must fully comply with 37 CFR 3.73(b).

7. Claims 1-26 are rejected on the ground of nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claim 13 of U.S. Patent No. 6,498,946. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other. Claim 13 of the reference application ('946) recites "the sequence extends over one or more R-R intervals." Claims 1, 13, 19 and 25 of the instant application recite MR imaging over "successive R-R intervals," "a successive train of heartbeats," and "a train of R-R intervals." A sequence of one or more R-R intervals is inherently successive, and a sequence is equivalent to a train. Therefore, these two inventions are not patentably distinct from one another.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 101

8. 35 U.S.C. 101 reads as follows:

Whoever invents or discovers any new and useful process, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter, or any new and useful improvement thereof, may obtain a patent therefor, subject to the conditions and requirements of this title.

9. Claims 7-12 and 25-26 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 because the claimed inventions are directed to non-statutory subject matter.

Regarding claims 7-12, pulse sequences are electromagnetic signals, and are thereby classified as natural phenomena. As such, the inventions described by these claims do not meet the patent eligibility requirements set forth by 35 U.S.C. 101.

Regarding claims 25-26, a computer signal is neither a process, machine, manufacture nor a composition of matter. Therefore, the subject matter described in these claims is considered non-statutory and unpatentable. Applicant's attention is directed toward 1300 OG 142 for further detail regarding the basis of this decision.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

10. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

11. Claims 1-5 and 7-26 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Foo (US Patent 6,498,946), cited by Applicant in the Information Disclosure.

Regarding claims 1-3, 25 and 26, Foo ('946) discloses a method of multi-slice fast spin echo image acquisition with black blood contrast in cardiac imaging (Abstract). The method of Foo ('946) includes applying a non-selective inversion pulse, followed by a re-inversion pulse that is slice-selective over a region encompassing a plurality of slice selections (Abstract). Foo ('946) discloses that the execution of the RF excitation pulses is timed such that the signal from blood is near a null point before data acquisition (Abstract). Foo ('946) discloses that the pulse

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sequence is triggered by the start of an R-R interval (col. 4 line 44), and that the sequence can be performed over multiple R-R intervals (col. 5 line 12).

Regarding claim 4, Foo ('946) states that an MR scan is complete when an array of raw k-space data has been acquired in the memory module, and further teaches that an array of k-space data is acquired for each image to be reconstructed (col. 4 line 11).

Regarding claim 5, Foo ('946) discloses that his method is capable of acquiring multiple slices of image data per patient breath hold (col. 2 line 2).

Regarding claims 7-24, the apparatus illustration provided by Foo ('946) (Figure 1) is identical to that of the instant application, and therefore both systems are assumed to satisfy the same limitations.

The applied reference has a common assignee with the instant application. Based upon the earlier effective U.S. filing date of the reference, it constitutes prior art under 35 U.S.C. 102(e). This rejection under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) might be overcome either by a showing under 37 CFR 1.132 that any invention disclosed but not claimed in the reference was derived from the inventor of this application and is thus not the invention "by another," or by an appropriate showing under 37 CFR 1.131.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

12. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

13. Claim 6 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being obvious over Foo (US Patent 6,498,946).

Foo ('946) teaches that his invention is capable of acquiring multiple slices of image data per patient breath hold (col. 2 line 2). Foo ('946) is silent with respect to the exact number of slices that may be imaged per breath hold. As Applicant has noted in the specification of the instant application, it is well known in the art to acquire 8 to 12 slices of data per scan when obtaining black blood contrast images. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to acquire four slices of data per patient breath-hold in light of the disclosure provided by Foo ('946).

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The applied reference has a common assignee with the instant application. Based upon the earlier effective U.S. filing date of the reference, it constitutes prior art only under 35 U.S.C. 102(e). This rejection under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) might be overcome by: (1) a showing under 37 CFR 1.132 that any invention disclosed but not claimed in the reference was derived from the inventor of this application and is thus not an invention "by another"; (2) a showing of a date of invention for the claimed subject matter of the application which corresponds to subject matter disclosed but not claimed in the reference, prior to the effective U.S. filing date of the reference under 37 CFR 1.131; or (3) an oath or declaration under 37 CFR 1.130 stating that the application and reference are currently owned by the same party and that the inventor named in the application is the prior inventor under 35 U.S.C. 104, together with a terminal disclaimer in accordance with 37 CFR 1.321(c). This rejection might also be overcome by showing that the reference is disqualified under 35 U.S.C. 103(c) as prior art in a rejection under 35 U.S.C. 103(a). See MPEP § 706.02(l)(1) and § 706.02(l)(2).

Conclusion

14. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Pan (US PG Pub 2003/0069493) teaches a related MRI apparatus for black blood contrast.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Parikha Solanki whose telephone number is 571.272.3248. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F, 8 - 4:30pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Brian Casler can be reached on 571.272.4956. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.


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Parikha Solanki
6 September 2006


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